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General and complete disarmament: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Identical letters dated 23 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia concerning the recent developments in the conflict zone in the Tskhinvali region of Georgia, issued in the Tbilisi on 22 September 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, under item 97 (t), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Revaz **Adamia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 23 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

22 September 2005

On 20 September 2005, the Tskhinvali separatist authorities held a celebration of the "independence" of the self-proclaimed republic of South Ossetia and conducted a military parade.

The military parade gave a display of military detachments and armoured vehicles, including three self-propelled howitzers (2S1), four tanks (T-55), four armoured personnel carriers (BTR-70), three armoured combat vehicles (BMP-2), three 120mm mortars and three anti-aircraft guns (ZU-23-2).

The above-mentioned represents a gross violation of the basic documents of the peace process — namely, the 1992 Sochi Agreement, the 2004 agreement reached at the meeting between Georgian Prime Minster Zurab Zhvania and South Ossetian de facto leader Eduard Kokoity and the decisions of the Joint Control Commission. This fact was negatively appraised by the OSCE Mission to Georgia as well.

A display of heavy armaments and armoured vehicles that are limited by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is a major violation of the main provisions and principles of the CFE Treaty, a cornerstone of European security, thus negatively affecting the situation in the region.

Representatives of the separatist regimes of Abkhazia, Transniestria and Nagorno Karabakh participated in the "festive" events. Most regrettably, members of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, mainly from the ruling party, representatives of the central and regional executive authorities, including leaders of the federal agencies, and high-ranking religious leaders also took part in this masquerade and demonstration of force. All these persons violated the State border of Georgia and entered Georgian territory without proper visas.

Taking into consideration the commitment of the Russian Federation to perform the role of principal mediator in the settlement of conflict in the Tskhinvali region of Georgia and to be the guarantor of peace agreements reached, the appearance of the Russian representatives at the side of the Tskhinvali de facto authorities clearly indicates their unveiled support for the separatist regime. Furthermore, despite Georgia's numerous protests, the Russian side continues providing armaments and ammunition to the separatists.

This behaviour is a flagrant violation of universally recognized norms and principles, as well as bilateral multilateral commitments undertaken by the Russian Federation, and infringes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

At the same time, the leadership of Russian peacekeeping forces is merely observing the movements of heavy armoured vehicles in the conflict zone. Instead of opposing these activities, the peacekeeping contingent is busy escorting and providing security for the "guests" hastening to attend the "anniversary

celebrations". Indeed, the arming of separatists, unrestricted movement of illegal armed groups, criminals and smuggled goods, abduction of people on a daily basis and other grave criminal activities in the conflict zone happen with their support. All of the above-mentioned is in blatant violation of the mandate of the peacekeeping forces, calling into question the entire issue of the expediency of their presence in the conflict zone.

In addition, the leadership of the peacekeeping forces makes absolutely irresponsible statements and heaps ungrounded accusations on the Georgian side.

The Government of Georgia has repeatedly stressed that the existence of illicit arms in the conflict zones is a major source of provocations, necessitating an intensification of international control in this regard. As to the recent incidents that took place in the Tskhinvali region, the Georgian side strongly insists on the conduct of an objective investigation, with the participation of OSCE.

Once more, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia strongly demands that the Russian Federation put an immediate end to destructive activities in the Tskhinvali region and refrain from supplying arms to the separatist regimes.

At the same time, we urge the international community to make a due assessment of the Russian Federation's attempt to encroach upon Georgia's sovereign rights, interfere in its international affairs and infringe its territorial integrity.